

**Press Release**  
**Maine State Planning Office**

***State Assists Towns with Beach Water Quality Monitoring***

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Augusta, Maine—The Maine Healthy Beaches Program is dedicated to providing safe and healthy swimming opportunities along the coast. The program is a partnership between the Maine State Planning Office/Coastal Program, University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant, and the Maine departments of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection, and Marine Resources.

Recently, several Maine coastal communities have posted swimming advisories due to bacterial contamination in the water. The Maine Healthy Beaches Program has been working to identify the source of contamination.

The towns of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Biddeford contacted the State of Maine for assistance. Through the Maine Healthy Beaches Program, state government has quickly responded working to determine possible sources of the contamination in the following ways:

- The Maine Healthy Beaches Program will continue regular monitoring at Gooch's, Goose Rocks, and Fortune's Rocks beaches with daily sampling conducted at Goose Rocks Beach until further notice
- The Maine Healthy Beaches Program is implementing a concentrated monitoring effort in the Little River, Batson River, and Kennebunk River, the contributing tributaries to the beach waters
- The towns will pay for increased monitoring as well to determine possible sources
- The Maine State Planning Office is contacting the program's participating state agency commissioners asking them to make this a priority
- The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has conducted an initial sanitary survey in the watersheds of the Little River and Batson River to determine whether septic system failures are the cause of the problem. The department has committed to conduct a full sanitary survey if the monitoring provides results warranting one

- The Maine Geological Survey will conduct nearshore surface and subsurface water current monitoring prior and during the spring high tide, scheduled in mid-August, to determine pollutant distribution patterns to assist in the identification of the source
- The Maine Healthy Beaches Program is evaluating the water quality data to determine if there is a correlation to time, location and tidal stage, again with the goal of determining the source of bacteria
- The Maine Healthy Beaches Program will continue to coordinate state government efforts, as well as develop further testing requirements where necessary and needed

The state is committed to helping the towns identify the source of contamination so that clean-up efforts can commence as quickly as possible.

The *Maine Healthy Beaches* program is managed by the State Planning Office. It is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There are now 42 beaches in the program in 20 towns and state parks.

Daily updates on conditions at participating Maine beaches can be found at the Maine Healthy Beaches Program Web site at [www.mainehealthybeaches.org](http://www.mainehealthybeaches.org).



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